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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (31 March-21 September 2000)

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides an account of developments and activities in respect of the mandate entrusted to the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) in accordance with Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) of 3 April 1991, 689 (1991) of 14 June 1991 and 806 (1993) of 5 February 1993. It covers the period from 31 March to 21 September 2000.

II. Developments in the demilitarized zone

2. The situation in the demilitarized zone remained generally calm throughout the period under review, and UNIKOM carried out its operations without interruption.

3. There were 42 violations, 43 incidents and 7 complaints in the demilitarized zone. The violations consisted of 15 ground violations, 10 weapons violations, 11 maritime violations and 6 air violations. As in past reporting periods, the ground violations occurred mainly when Iraqi vehicles used the only hard-surface road along the border, which crosses in and out of Kuwaiti territory.

4. Most of the weapons violations were minor and involved incidents such as a single shot fired close to a UNIKOM patrol and observation base, a civilian observed by UNIKOM on the Iraqi side of the demilitarized zone carrying an AK-47 assault rifle and armed coast guard personnel from both Iraq and Kuwait observed in the waters of the other side or in the Khawr 'Abd Allah waterway.

5. During the reporting period, there continued to be no UNIKOM flights over the Iraqi side of the demilitarized zone since they were suspended in December 1998, when the Iraqi authorities informed UNIKOM that they could not guarantee the safety of flights in the area owing to the conflict with the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland regarding the "no-fly" zones. In three of the six recorded air violations, UNIKOM was able to identify the violating aircraft as follows:

(a) On 8 April, an F-16 flew over Sector South headquarters at low altitude in a north-east to west direction;

(b) On 24 April, UNIKOM military observers at patrol and observation base N-9 observed a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter flying over the demilitarized zone in a south to north direction and returning south within two minutes;

(c) On 31 May, a UNIKOM helicopter observed a white Gazelle helicopter (FORKAN 34) flying over a Kuwaiti police post.

The three other air violations involved aircraft flying too high to be identified.

6. The 11 maritime violations involved Iraqi tugboats or patrol boats in Kuwaiti waters of the Khawr 'Abd Allah waterway. For example, on 29 June a UNIKOM maritime patrol observed one Iraqi Coast Guard patrol boat heading east in Kuwaiti waters.

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7. Three of the seven complaints UNIKOM received in the reporting period were from Iraq and four were from Kuwait. The three from Iraq were as follows:

(a) On 23 April the senior Iraqi liaison officer complained that four aircraft from Kuwait had been observed flying over Iraqi airspace on 22 April at 15.30 hours;

(b) On 25 April the senior Iraqi liaison officer complained that 18 aircraft supported by 1 E2C AWACS aircraft, flying from Kuwait towards Iraq, had been observed over Iraqi airspace on 24 April at 10.50 hours;

(c) On 20 September the senior Iraqi liaison officer complained that there had been 200 sorties over the demilitarized zone by F-14, F-15, F-16 and Tornado EA 613 aircraft of the United States and the United Kingdom from 1 to 31 August 2000.

In all the above cases, UNIKOM was unable to confirm or deny the alleged incidents.

8. The four complaints lodged by Kuwait were as follows:

(a) On 5 August the senior Kuwaiti liaison officer complained that two Iraqi boats, each equipped with a machine gun, had been observed in Iraqi waters east of Warbah Island. UNIKOM dispatched a helicopter patrol to investigate the complaint, but nothing was found;

(b) On 10 August the senior Kuwaiti liaison officer complained about the presence of three armed Iraqi patrol vessels in the demilitarized zone north of Warbah Island. The complaint was investigated and UNIKOM confirmed by radar the presence of a vessel in that area in Iraqi waters, although the vessel was proceeding towards the south-east and seemed to be of a commercial nature. The senior Kuwaiti liaison officer was informed accordingly;

(c) On 11 August the senior Kuwaiti liaison officer complained about the presence of three armed Iraqi patrol boats moving south-east from the port of Umm Qasr. The vessels had already been identified by a UNIKOM maritime patrol, which had reported the violation;

(d) On 5 September the senior Kuwaiti liaison officer lodged an official complaint stating that Iraqis had cut off the signposts of a border marker and of a nearby traffic sign. After conducting an investigation it was confirmed that the signposts had been cut off recently, but it could not be determined who had done it.

9. The 43 reported incidents were: 17 casualty evacuations resulting from exploding mines, 12 attempts by Iraqi civilians to sell whiskey to UNIKOM military observers plus attempts by people to take photographs or make video recordings in the demilitarized zone without the prior consent of UNIKOM.

10. The fence built by Kuwait along its border in the demilitarized zone has been electrified since the end of April. A centrally controlled electronic surveillance system has been put into operation along the fence, and the Kuwaiti authorities are relocating all Kuwaiti police posts to positions adjacent to the gates in the fence. This has led to extensive building within the demilitarized zone, involving the tearing down of old Kuwaiti police posts and the erection of new ones. Because of these activities, UNIKOM patrols occasionally encountered closed gates. However, the Kuwaiti authorities have assured UNIKOM that this issue will be resolved with completion of the construction of the new Kuwaiti police posts. By mid-July, Sector North had reported that all the new Kuwaiti police posts within its area of responsibility had been completed, were staffed by Kuwaiti police officers and were operational. By mid-August, Sector South had issued a similar report.

11. A high level of activity was reported at the oil installations on the Kuwaiti side of the demilitarized zone. Iraqi oil production close to the demilitarized zone also expanded during the reporting period.

12. The Mission's observation of the Khawr 'Abd Allah waterway has gradually increased. Currently UNIKOM conducts 10 hours of boat patrols each day on the waterway, in addition to daily helicopter patrols. All the necessary personnel and equipment have been put in place. UNIKOM boat patrols had been operating mainly out of patrol and observation base M-2, as the communications between UNIKOM headquarters and the three patrol and observation bases (M-1, on Warbah Island, M-2, in Camp Khor, and M-3, on Faw Peninsula) were not fully operational. Patrol and observation base M-1 had been staffed by only two UNIKOM military observers. With the communication system now completed, patrol and observation base M-1 has reached its full strength of 10 military

observers, 2 maritime personnel and 2 engineers. Further construction work has been done by UNIKOM engineers at the Hecham Channel, where a new pier has been erected. This pier enables UNIKOM to transfer personnel and light equipment to patrol and observation base M-3 every day at high tide without having to leave the demilitarized zone. It has also made it possible to reduce the travel time from 3 hours to 40 minutes one way, facilitating emergency maintenance and medical interventions. Nevertheless, the need to organize two convoys per month to patrol and observation base M-3 via Basrah and along the Shatt Al'Arab waterway will continue to exist. These convoys resupply the patrol and observation bases and allow the completion of large-scale repair work where the required equipment cannot be transferred by small patrol boats.

13. UNIKOM visited 69 ships at Umm Qasr harbour under the "oil-for-food" programme. The ships were carrying predominantly wheat, rice, vegetable oil, baby food and spare parts.

14. The humanitarian activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross, including mail exchanges across the border, have continued.

15. UNIKOM continued to maintain close and regular liaison with the authorities of both Iraq and Kuwait at various levels, including visits by the Force Commander to Baghdad and Kuwait City, and through the UNIKOM liaison offices in the two capital cities. Both the Kuwaiti and Iraqi Governments have continued to cooperate with the Mission in the conduct of its operations.

III. Organizational matters

16. As at 31 August 2000, the overall strength of UNIKOM was 1,309, consisting of the following components:

(a) A total of 195 military observers, from Argentina (4), Austria (5), Bangladesh (5), Canada (6), China (11), Denmark (5), Fiji (7), Finland (5), France (11), Ghana (5), Greece (5), Hungary (5), India (6), Indonesia (4), Ireland (6), Italy (7), Kenya (4), Malaysia (5), Nigeria (5), Pakistan (6), Poland (6), Romania (3), the Russian Federation (11), Senegal (6), Singapore (5), Sweden (6), Thailand (5), Turkey (6), the United Kingdom (11), the United States (11), Uruguay (6) and Venezuela (2);

(b) An infantry battalion of 775 from Bangladesh;

(c) An engineering unit of 50 from Argentina;

(d) A logistics unit of 34 from Argentina;

(e) A helicopter unit of 35 from Bangladesh;

(f) A medical unit of 14 from Germany;

(g) A total of 206 civilian staff, of whom 52 were recruited internationally and 154 locally.

Major General John A. Vize (Ireland) continued as Force Commander.

IV. Financial aspects

17. The General Assembly, in its resolution 54/18 B of 15 June 2000, appropriated the amount of $52,710,270 gross for the maintenance of UNIKOM for the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001, subject to review by the Security Council with regard to the question of termination or continuation of the Mission. Two thirds of the cost of the Mission, equivalent to $33.5 million, is to be funded through voluntary contributions from the Government of Kuwait. Assessments on Member States have been made for the period ending 6 October 2000. The Government of Kuwait has paid its voluntary contributions in full to 30 June 2000 and an additional amount of $3.4 million for the period to 6 October 2000.

18. As at 31 August, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNIKOM for the period from inception to 6 October 2000 amounted to $15.1 million. The unpaid assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations amounted to $2.4 billion.

V. Observations

19. During the period under review, the situation along the border between Iraq and Kuwait remained generally quiet. UNIKOM continued to carry out its tasks smoothly, thereby contributing to the maintenance of calm and stability along the border. In undertaking these tasks, it continued to receive the cooperation of the Iraqi and Kuwaiti authorities. I recommend that the Mission be maintained.

20. In conclusion, I wish to pay tribute to the Force Commander, Major General Vize, and to the men and women under his command for the manner in which they have discharged their responsibilities. Their discipline and bearing have been of high order, reflecting credit on themselves, their countries and the United Nations.

UNIKOM DEPLOYMENT AS OF SEPTEMBER 2000
DEPLOIEMENT DE LA MONUIK EN SEPTEMBRE 2000
ДИСЛОКАЦИЯ ИКМООНН НА СЕНТЯБРЬ 2000
DESPLIEGUE DE LA UNIKOM EN SEPTIEMBRE DE 2000
IRAQ
KUWAIT
SAUDI ARABIA
IRAN
SOUTHERN SECTOR
S1
S2
S3
S4
S5
S6
S7
S8
N1
N2
N3
N4
N5
N6
N7
N8
HQ